



Virtual intercultural communication practice and learning

An ordinary gamification perspective

Kurt Kohn, University of Tübingen, Germany

kurt.kohn@uni-tuebingen.de


www.tecola.eu > [Teacher Resources](#)

VI Valencian Workshop on Computer-Assisted Language Learning:
Gamification and Communicative Competence

8-9 November 2019, Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain

The research this talk is based on was supported by the European Erasmus+ project TeCoLa (grant agreement: 2016-1-NL01-KA201-022997). The presentation reflects the views of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The concept „game“ – a slippery customer



Membership
in the category
“game”

Our **Aristotelian** intuition:

> necessary and sufficient conditions

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*:

“Consider for example the proceedings that we call ‘games’. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?”

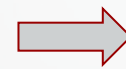
> **Family resemblances**



Games in a pedagogical context

**A change in
perspective & purpose**

Gamifying **LEARNING** activities



fun, motivation

Gamifying **REAL-WORLD** activities



making world accessible,
taking part



**Children gamify
real-world activities**





Children gamify
real-world activities





**Children gamify
real-world activities**





**Children gamify
real-world activities**



create

*When children
gamify
real-world activities
they ...*

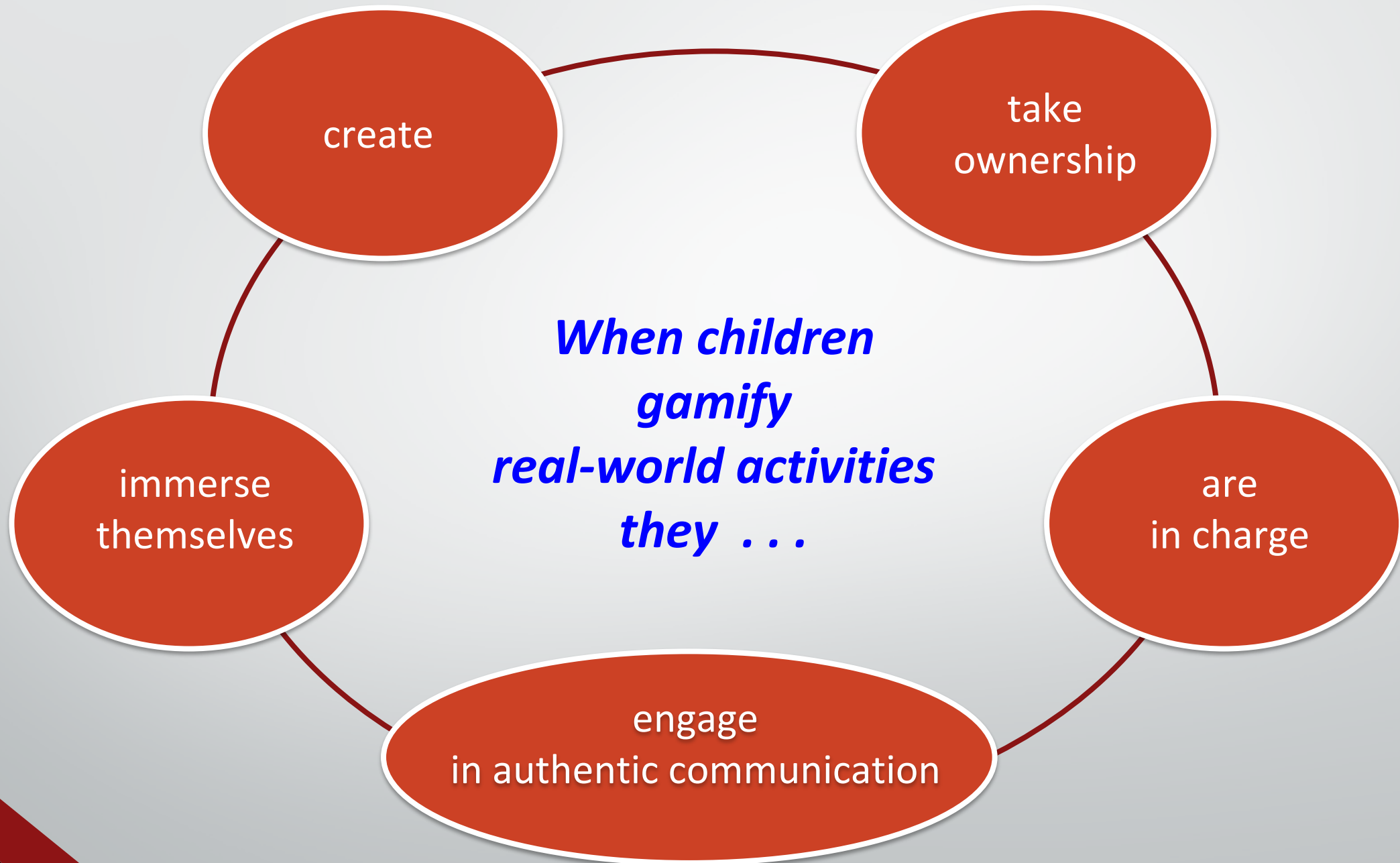
Perception of reality



Perceiving the external world
by creating your internal
version of it

Reality as a projected world

[e.g. Ray Jackendoff, 1983]





Gamifying real-world activities

Pedagogical potential

- **Simplification** of complex **real-world activities** still out of reach
- **Creation** of a **protected space** of controlled real-world immersion for safe practice and learning - a Vygotskian **Zone of Proximal Development**
- **Monitoring** guided by one's own **requirements of satisfaction and success**

Authentic agency - Ownership - Emancipation

Gamifying real-world communication in the TeCoLa Virtual World

Students meet as avatars in international teams in **TeCoLa Virtual World** scenarios to collaborate on a given task

Learning station boards display multimedia task content:

- text passages and pictures
- links to video clips and web pages
- questions and instructions

Teachers can **edit the content** on learning station boards



Students

- follow the instructions on the boards
- discuss the issues addressed
- collaborate to solve a problem



Example: Discussing waste issues in the TeCoLa Virtual World



Dutch and German
secondary school students
Level: B2 / age 16-18

Learning objective:
to practise & improve
oral communication



A learning path in the TeCoLa Virtual World



Topic:
*Waste & waste
avoidance*

- Working **in pairs** and **from home**, the students
- watch a video
 - discuss and decide which statements were made in the video
 - exchange personal experiences and opinions
 - browse and collect ideas for how to avoid waste

What kind of English?

Language acquisition = socially mediated individual construction

- In my mind, heart and behavior -> MY English
- Shaped by who I am and where I come from
- Guided by who I want to be, i.e.
by my own requirements of communicative & communal success

[Kohn 2018a]

Pedagogical implications

- Standard Native Speaker English – but with an open social constructivist orientation
- Pedagogical space for developing one's own signature (> MY English)
- Attention to speaker-learners' own requirements of success
- Attention to attitudinal skills such as tolerance for ambiguity, empathy, flexibility of behavior [Byram 1997] for both in intercultural AND everyday communicative
- Attention to monitoring for successful communication

[Kohn 2018b, 2020]

→ A pedagogical lingua franca approach

- Speaker-learners use their common target language as a pedagogical LF
- Guided by their agreed requirements of success and their desire for satisfaction

Insights from our case studies

Speaker-learner agency

communicative participation

cooperative topic dev't and problem solving

empathy and rapport

speaker-learner satisfaction

non-native speaker emancipation

Monitoring for communicative & communal success

comprehension

production

partner orientation

wait & see

school effect

→ **A need for pedagogical mediation**

[Kohn & Hoffstaedter 2017, Hoffstaedter & Kohn 2019, Kohn 2020]

A few references

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Multilingual Matters.

Hoffstaedter, P. & Kohn, K. (2019). *Monitoring for successful communication in pedagogical lingua franca exchanges in the TeCoLa Virtual World*. TeCoLa Case Study Report. [www.tecola.eu]

Jackendoff, R. (1983). *Semantics and cognition*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Kohn, K. (2019/20). A pedagogical lingua franca approach: Emancipating the foreign language learner. Plenary talk delivered at the Asia TEFL Conference, Bangkok, July 2019. *LEARN Journal*, spring 2020.

Kohn, K. (2018a). MY English: a social constructivist perspective on ELF. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 7/1: 1-24.

Kohn, K. (2018b). Towards the reconciliation of ELF and EFL: Theoretical issues and pedagogical challenges. In N. Sifakis & N. Tsantila (eds.), *English as a Lingua Franca for EFL Contexts* (pp. 32-48). Multilingual Matters.

Kohn, K. & Hoffstaedter, P. (2015). Flipping intercultural communication practice: opportunities and challenges for the foreign language classroom. In J. Colpaert, A. Aerts, M. Oberhofer & M. Gutiérrez-Colón Plana (eds.), *Task design & CALL. Proceedings of CALL 2015* (pp. 338-354). Universiteit Antwerpen.

Kohn, K. & Hoffstaedter, P. (2017). Learner agency and non-native speaker identity in pedagogical lingua franca conversations: insights from intercultural telecollaboration in foreign language education, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 30/5: 351-367.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953) *Philosophical investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.



Thank You!

TeCoLa
Teacher Resources
www.tecola.eu

